

Name: _____ Block: _____ Date: _____

DIRECTIONS: *Read and annotate the following crime scene scenario. Then answer the questions that follow.*

The Enrique Camarena Case

In 1985, the bodies of Enrique “Kiki” Camarena Salazar, a U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agent, and Alfredo Zavala Aguilar, the Mexican reconnaissance pilot with whom Salazar worked, were found in the Mexican state of Michoacan. Camarena was an undercover agent assigned to clandestine surveillance of Mexican drug lords. The Mexican Judicial Police reported that both men died in a shootout between police and the drug dealers at El Mareno ranch in Michoacan. Close examination of the bodies, however, revealed that they had been tortured and that Camarena’s head had been crushed – unusual behavior for a crime in which a law enforcement agent had died.

DEA officials sent evidence taken from Camarena’s body to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Crime Laboratories for further testing to determine conclusively what had happened to the two men. FBI Special Agent Ron Rawait, a forensic geologist, requested soil samples from both Camarena’s body and the location the body was found. Soil had mixed with body fluids at wound sites throughout the slain agent’s body; a process that takes some time. This rocky soil contained tan and brown volcanic ash and fragments of rhyolite, a fine-grained igneous rock that is rich in silica. By contrast, soil samples taken from the ranch in Michoacán contained a coarse, greenish-black basaltic glass but no rhyolite. Further analysis of the material found in the body’s wounds led FBI geologist, with the help of Smithsonian Institute Scientists, to determine that the material was consistent with that found in the El Tequilla ash flow in the Guadalajara Basin, nearly 100km north of the site in Michoacan. Investigators now knew the agent was not murdered in Michoacan – but they needed still more information to solve the case. The evidence showing that the body was originally buried in Guadalajara allowed the investigators to solve the mystery. The Mexican police, facing mounting pressure from the U.S. government to find Camarena, had conspired with the drug lords to move the FBI agent’s body from Guadalajara (where the crime occurred) to Michoacán. The Mexican police subsequently raided the farm in Michoacan, where they killed the occupants placed the dead agent’s remains in a prominent position, and declared that they had found Camarena’s body.

Explain how the FBI used the physical properties of soil to solve the crime within this story.